



Canadian Far Right Extremism

The Racist Podcaster Who Started a Neo-Nazi Coffee Company to Fund White

A VICE investigation has revealed the identity of one of the hosts of Canada's most popular neo-Nazi podcast and his attempt at building a neo-Nazi company.

By [Martin Patriquin](#), [Mack Lamoureux](#), [Alheli Picazo](#), and [Evan Balgord](#)

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ILLUSTRATION BY NOEL RANSOME.

This project was in collaboration with the Canadian Anti-Hate Network.

In the spring of 2017, Thomas White had an idea: What if he combined his love of gourmet coffee with his staunch belief in a white ethnostate?

In caffeinated circles, White was already well-known. Espresso Joya, which he opened in 2015, was a fixture of Thunder Bay, Ontario's small but vibrant arts scene. The walls of the coffee shop, located in the town's trendy Waterfront District, served as a revolving gallery for local artists. Joya's small stage regularly hosted a mostly-acoustic plethora of singer-songwriters, and its shelves were stocked with local food and goods.

The quality of Joya's espresso, hyped by locals and out of town Yelp users alike, completed this artsy smorgasbord. "It's all about doing really exceptional quality in terms of the quality and the product as well as providing a really nice space for local artists," White said in a [short 2017 documentary](#) on Thunder Bay's coffee scene. An accredited teacher, he taught drawing art at the local arts centre and was a volunteer firefighter.



PHOTO VIA "COFFEE CULTURE: THUNDER BAY STYLE" DIRECTED BY DANIELLE CLARKE.

Online, White was the antithesis of this very earnest coffee shop owner. For the last six months, under the alias “League of the North,” White has co-hosted “This Hour Has 88 Minutes,” the most popular white supremacist podcast in the country.

The podcast’s title, a riff on the CBC comedy show with a nod to 88, or the numerical representation of “Heil Hitler,” speaks to the show’s format and ethos: a white nationalist take on the news replete with racial epithets, misogyny, and conspiracy theories, coupled with Holocaust denials and the occasional veiled call for violence. And White wanted to get his coffee into the hands of 88 Minutes listeners, as well as anyone else with pride in their white skin.

VICE conducted a months-long investigation into White and his coffee businesses. This included going through hours upon hours of podcasts, thousands of forum posts, pulling property records, and speaking to

same conclusion independently—former Thunder Bay coffee whiz Thomas White was the man behind both the neo-Nazi coffee company Rising Sun Coffee and League of the North, making him one of the biggest players in the booming Canadian alt-right scene.



PHOTO VIA SCREENSHOT.

During these podcasts, “League of the North”—one of several of White’s aliases uncovered by VICE—often acts as cheerleader for the movement, speaking at length for the need to organize and promote white nationalism. “It’s really easy, especially where I live, to feel really isolated in our movement to secure the existence of our people and a future for white children,” he said in his first guest appearance on the show on February 20, 2017. “We are the future of our people so we need to get organized.”

slang for informal get togethers—for fellow rural racists. He led by example, heralding the benefits of clean living, physical fitness, and proper grooming in preparation for the inevitable showdown. “You’re going to do this because you want to improve yourself, and because you don’t want to be machete’d to death by a n----r” he wrote on ‘504um’, an online forum on The Right Stuff website in April 2017 as League of the North. (*Editor’s note: offensive term redacted by VICE.*)



PHOTO VIA SCREENSHOT.

He saw Northern Ontario as fertile ground. “Every blue collar guy I know will express outright racism when given permission,” League of the North wrote in The Right Stuff forum last month. The biggest local scourge according to his posts was the many Indigenous people in and around Thunder Bay, whom he referred to as “Chugs,” “Injuns,” and “tee-pee n----s.”

Key to organizing the Ontario neo-Nazi community was fundraising—and White saw opportunity in coffee. He loved the stuff, but clearly didn’t like the progressive aesthetic of coffee shop culture, nor its typically left-wing consumers—“shitlib normies,” as he described them online.

dedicated to both quality beans and the protection of the white race. 10 percent of all sales would go to the buyer's white nationalist charity of choice. "Creating a new economy for the future of our people," read the tagline emblazoned on a picture of an all-white tiki torch-carrying brigade from the Charlottesville riots last year.



PHOTO VIA SCREENSHOT.

For White, it made for a contradictory existence. By day, White slinged coffee and otherwise endeared himself to Thunder Bay's cloistered artistic community. By night, he denied the Holocaust, denounced women and immigrants, and waxed crudely about the superiority of the white race—when he wasn't fomenting a self-sufficient, whites-only economy by way of bitcoins and coffee beans.

"Now you can have your autistically-curated coffee gear, and never need to interact with stretched-ear'd bearded faggots," White wrote on an alt-right forum, in the months before his coffee shop closed after much of Thunder Bay had turned against him due to his far-right views.

"Nazi Barista, at your service."

In a sense, Thomas White doxxed himself. VICE was able to ascertain his identity, and attach it to his myriad online aliases, not through a trove of hacked documents but by matching language and following Internet Protocol addresses.

Rising Sun's internet site shared an IP address with Theleagueofthenorth.com, a self-described "fraternity" open to "European [men] of good character." According to League's postings on the white nationalist blog The Right Stuff, "League" modeled it after League of The South, a notorious Alabama-based neo-Confederate organization advocating southern secession and white supremacy.

White tethered himself to these various aliases through good, old fashioned plagiarism. On its website, Rising Sun Coffee described its Erika Roast (named after a German military marching song) as "Apple and coffee cherry with tart acidity and a mellow, nutty aftertaste"—a word-for-word copy of the description used by Rose N Crantz Roasting Co, Espresso Joya's unwitting supplier, for one of its roasts.



PHOTO VIA "COFFEE CULTURE: THUNDER BAY STYLE" DIRECTED BY DANIELLE CLARKE.

Like many in the community, Rose N Crantz Roasting was unaware of White's leanings. "I find such movements despicable. While we no longer have dealings with Mr. White, we would have parted ways with him much earlier if we had known," said Rose N Crantz owner Jamie Nichols. Dan Dampier, the owner of Wolfhead Coffee, another one of Joya's suppliers, said that his company stopped supplying White with coffee after his cafe shut its doors.

"I will not do business with Thomas White," he told VICE. "If I was aware that he was such a hateful person I would have never done business with him at all. This alt-right white nationalist racist stuff isn't what I'm about, it isn't what Wolfhead Coffee is about, and I don't think it's what our community is about."

Using Rose N Crantz's supplier list, VICE was able to ascertain that Joya closed down at the same time and in similar fashion as Rising Sun Coffee's owner described anonymously online. From here the similarities between White and League of the North kept piling up—working as firefighters,

confirmed to VICE on background that he indeed was the alt-right's "Nazi Barista."

A search of the Internet Archive showed that the roaster dropped Joya as a customer in July 2017. Another internet search yielded a Facebook post from July 14, 2017 announcing the closure of Espresso Joya. It was written by Thomas White.

White kept two Twitter accounts, @LeagueOfNorth and @thomas_mjolnir—an apparent allusion to Thor's Hammer, a miniature one of which White wears around his neck. On Gab, the Twitter-like forum favoured by the alt-right, a pastoral scene complete with a blazing Swastika rising from behind a mountain range dominates Mjolnir's page.



PHOTO VIA "COFFEE CULTURE: THUNDER BAY STYLE" DIRECTED BY DANIELLE CLARKE.

White didn't respond to requests for comment for this story when contacted on May 9 and given a thorough overview of everything that was

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“I am writing to you on behalf of the TRS media company to inform you that you do not have permission to reproduce copyrighted audio from "This Hour Has 88 Minutes" or any other podcast on the TRS website,” read the email.

The 88 Minutes archives were removed a few hours later. “Johnathan Boone,” 88 Minutes’ perpetual intern, erased his Twitter profile shortly thereafter. On 504um, the normally mouthy League went silent before his account was deleted completely at about 10:30 EST. “Axe in The Deep,” 88 Minutes’ Ottawa-based host, deleted his account at about the same time.

Of course, nothing ever disappears from the internet.

This Hour Has 88 Minutes began life in September 2016. The hosts and guests would discuss and comment on news items, complain about politicians, and generally cast a beady eye at anything non-white and non-male. Jews were “the enemy,” as host Axe in the Deep often said. Blacks, women, leftists, gays, lesbians, trans people, and a host of other minorities never fared much better.

Muslims were disparaged as violent mass killers, though the hosts often spoke approvingly of white perpetrators of mass violence. “I do not endorse this at all but this is kind of true there's [Anders] Breivik approach where you know his grisly actions saved his country from becoming too much like Sweden right now,” Axe said in an 88 Minutes podcast from last April, in reference to the Norwegian white nationalist who killed 77 people, mostly teenagers, in 2011.

ended up getting shot. It's not great but sometimes sometimes if you want to make an omelet you got to crack a couple eggs.”



PHOTO VIA SCREENSHOT.

Though Canadian, the show had an international reach. It was often uploaded and shared on the Daily Stormer, one of the most prominent white nationalist websites in the world. “Zeiger,” an editor and writer for Daily Stormer recently discovered by the Montreal Gazette to be Montrealer Gabriel Sohier-Chaput, made four appearances on the show. “[88 Minutes] is unironically one of my favourite podcasts. Literally the only source for non-pozzed news from Canada,” wrote one Daily Stormer commentator.

Profane, proudly hateful and full of inside jokes, 88 Minutes was an important contribution to the spreading of the white nationalist movement, according to Keegan Hanks of the SPLC.

many, there are, particularly on the right side. Not only that, but This Hour Has 88 Minutes was hosted. They have made a prolific amount of content in their short couple of years in existence. It's really critical for new and fledgling members indoctrination into this world."

Users agreed with Hanks' assertion that podcasts work as recruitment tools. Several posters on TRS, many of them Canadian, stated that This Hour Has 88 Minutes was their entry point into white nationalism, aiding them to graduate from 'shitposting'—slang for mostly anonymous posting of messages on the internet—to IRL activity.



TRS USERS BEMOANING THIS HOUR HAS 88 MINUTES BEING TAKEN DOWN. PHOTO VIA SCREENSHOT.

One white nationalist, who goes by Cracker Jack, articulated this sentiment as a guest on the 87th episode of the podcast. This Hour Has 88 Minutes "changed his life" and that the podcasters "affect the culture more strongly than any other group in Canada," he said.

"I always often find it pretty surreal to think there's several thousand people listening to me fucking shitpost every week," White responded. "It's

On 88 Minutes and elsewhere, White built a suitably fierce persona to make himself known in the alpha male world of white nationalism—and at a brawny 6'4" he certainly had the appearance to back it up.



PHOTO VIA "COFFEE CULTURE: THUNDER BAY STYLE" DIRECTED BY DANIELLE CLARKE.

"I am a father of 3, an entrepreneur, a volunteer firefighter, I work-out, commute to work, manage employees and a household, cut and chop wood for my wood stoves, keep a flock of chickens, have a dog, and train my boy to target shoot, spend quality time with my daughters, and somehow I still find time to shitpost. I came from a single-mother household. I never had an 'easy job' handed to me. I graduated with 50k of student loan debt which I paid off with hard labour in under 3 years," he wrote on the 504um in April 2017.

Reality is slightly more nuanced. An arts student who graduated from the Ontario College of Art and Design after a sojourn in Italy, White and his wife moved to the outskirts of Thunder Bay in 2008. His wife, a civil servant with



A SCREENSHOT OF THOMAS WHITE'S ART BLOG.

White taught figure drawing at the Baggage Building Arts Centre, where he taught how to capture the naked human form with charcoal on newsprint paper. His own sketches, posted on his blog, include resplendent naked women lounging on pillows and chairs. Another shows a male model, nude and muscular, seated and looking upwards as he leans back on his hands, legs spread. White also custom-painted motorcycle gas tanks.

At the same time, White was a prolific poster on 504um, where the subjects weren't nearly as genteel. White has posted there 3,800 times, for a total of nearly 100,000 words, since July 2016. In his early days, he would stay put to mostly to a conversation about weightlifting in a mega-thread entitled "The

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It's nearly impossible to summarize all his views, but within these conversations he spoke at length of his hatred of minorities, and about how he read *Siege*, the neo-Nazi tome that inspired the neo-Nazi terrorist organization known as Atomwaffen.



THE RIGHT STUFF LANDING PAGE. PHOTO VIA SCREENSHOT.

He spoke of his many rifles, and how he regularly took his son out target shooting. However, as his time cavorting with neo-Nazis online and in person went on, his rhetoric became more and more extreme. “Basically my kids are the one thing that keep me from seigeposting 24/7. Otherwise, it’d be massacres on the streets until I met an untimely end,” he said during an 88 Minutes podcast.

He mused about taking another wife—all the better to propagate the white race—and suggested to like-minded fathers on the forum that his young daughter would probably take a husband in ten years. “I want a nice young fella who is smart and responsible, and about 5 years older than her, and let

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In recent years, The Right Stuff has become one of the most resilient and influential hubs for the alt-right—outlasting the likes of Stormfront and the Daily Stormer, which have been shut down or taken offline.



PHOTO VIA SCREENSHOT.

"I would argue that The Right Stuff is the most important hub for the alt-right, right now. I say that mostly because of the audience it generates," said Hanks. "They command a very formal audience for all their podcasts—they host the Daily Shoah and Fash the Nation, probably the two most popular ones in the United States. They have the most popular one in Canada, This Hour Has 88 Minutes. They have a loyal listenership and a loyal audience and it makes it kind of a driver in the far-right."



PHOTO VIA SCREENSHOT.

In one of his final posts in early May, White wrote of his desire to come out publicly as a white nationalist. He'd already started with his own family. "My family knows. My side is completely supportive. Wife's fam is not in agreement but doesn't disown," he wrote. "I even had a very civilized conversation with my mother-in-law about how the ideal for their grandchildren's future is segregation. She tut-tutted, but that's about all. Many co-workers know and agree completely but aren't active politically."

For White, it was the optimistic first step towards "becoming fully public," as he once said. "I intend to use my real name proudly within our movement as soon as I can make myself reasonably anti-fragile," he wrote last year.

This meant casting aside his public persona as an arts-loving coffee shop owner and letting the online white nationalist version of himself creep into his daily life. Espresso Joya customers didn't take well to it.

On May 25, 2017, White took to The Right Stuff to announce the birth of Rising Sun Coffee. "While most of us love the delicious taste of

when acquiring that sweet caffeinated goodness,” he wrote.

The company logo featured the sonnerad, the mystical symbol first appropriated by the Nazis and more recently by the alt-right. \$14.88 bought you a pound of either Erika Medium or Hindenburg Dark Roast.



AN IMAGE POSTED BY A USER ON THE TRS FORUM.

White also had Axe In The Deep and Slug_2, then the hosts of This Hour Has 88 Minutes, vouch for him so that caffeine-starved neo-Nazis would look to Rising Sun for their coffee fix. Many did. “That's the stuff right there, bro,” wrote one pro-white coffee consumer shortly after the announcement. “If we build a base of businesses that are happy to support the movement with ad revenue, it takes away ZOG's favorite weapon of platform denial.”

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It received another bump when the Fatherland, another US-based neo-Nazi podcast, linked to its website and gave props to White. “This is 100 percent Nazi Coffee, he’s not cucking in any capacity whatsoever,” said Fatherland’s host. “Who would have thought a Canadian, a Leaf, would be the first with the balls to start a Nazi-themed business?”

Last December, Rising Sun Coffee garnered the highest of praise for someone on the far right, however backward: a piece from the Southern Poverty Law Center denouncing the initiative.



PHOTO VIA SCREENSHOT.

White donated five percent of his sales to one of six different causes of the buyer’s choice, all of which focused on the movement “to preserve and

Rising Sun's first customer, "James Morris," posted invoice #1 from Rising Sun Coffee on May 26, 2017. He ordered a pound each of the Erika and Hindenburg roasts, along with a French press. Morris donated about \$4 to the Daily Stormer Legal Defense Fund as a result.



AN IMAGE POSTED BY A USER ON THE TRS FORUM.

Other causes included Chris Cantwell's (the crying neo-Nazi) Legal Defense Fund; The Right Stuff forum; Identity Evropa; the Fash the Nation podcast; and the Suidlanders, a far-right South African survivalist group.

The site accepted PayPal or Bitcoin, discretion assured. When American neo-Nazis kvetched about shipping costs, White suggested they buy in bulk. "It does make a big difference," he wrote, "as sending a package with 3 or 4 lbs of coffee costs only slightly more than a single bag."



On the TRS forum, White wrote how he kept a spreadsheet of how much was to be sent to each cause, which he would then donate anonymously via bitcoin wallet. Once the process was done he would then send a receipt to the buyer. On the forum, White looked to hire a fellow racist to audit his sales and subsequent donations so that “the process remains transparent, and trust is maintained.”

When he became the new co-host of 88 Minutes on November 5, 2017, White, appearing as League of the North, used the opportunity to plug his coffee. “You can continue to be a coffee snob with Rising Sun Coffee without any of the anti-white guilt you might experience going to Starbucks,” he said. As a proudly white nationalist business owner and co-host of the country’s premier neo-Nazi podcast, Thomas White’s star continued to rise—however, in his real life, his white nationalist views were beginning to corrode everything White had built for himself.

Soon after Espresso Joya opened in February 2015 it became the darling of Thunder Bay’s artistic community. White’s “gourmet coffee shop is going gangbusters, creating new fans, delightfully surprised to learn how good coffee can be when made properly,” fawned a Northern Ontario travel magazine in June 2015.

the coffee shop as a "mainstage" and gallery of local artists. He would host vernissages of his favourites on his own dime.



PHOTO VIA "COFFEE CULTURE: THUNDER BAY STYLE" DIRECTED BY DANIELLE CLARKE.

“Thomas was genuine, sweet, thoughtful, and seemed ambitious and creative. I got no weird/strange vibes except an artsy dude who loved his coffee,” Danielle Clarke, the film student who directed the 2017 mini documentary on Thunder Bay coffee culture, told VICE. Clarke was unaware of any of White's racist views until contacted by VICE for this story.

But there were rumblings about White. He'd link to white nationalist or pro-Trump articles on Facebook, either through his own or Joya account. He painted Nordic runes that began appearing on the walls of the coffee shop, and would have loud political conversations with customers and artists—whether they liked it or not.

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Jean-Paul De Roover on Facebook. (De Roover wouldn't comment further. "I'd rather he nor his cause have any more attention given to them," he wrote in an email to VICE.)



AN IMAGE WHITE POSTED ON TRS OF HIS COFFEE.

According to White's posts on 504um, Joya's downfall began when he failed to denounce one of his pro-Trump employees. "Based on the fact that I didn't immediately freak-out and fire him, the cat ladies put two-and-two together and made connections about my power level which I will admit to having not perfectly hidden," he wrote on TRS in June of 2017. An unofficial boycott ensued, which White said resulted in a collapse in sales.

Espresso Joya closed last July. Shortly thereafter, White attempted to turn the shop's Facebook page into a place for political discussion—"a real

So White retreated back into the world of white nationalism and refocused his efforts on the 88 Minutes podcast, the League of the North fraternity and Rising Sun Coffee. None of the ventures have been particularly successful. 88 Minutes has gone dark. The League of the North page no longer exists outside the Internet Archive.

Rising Sun, meanwhile, delivered its last bag in early 2018, despite White's own pleas to fellow neo-Nazis to buy his coffee. "It's just a glitch and will be back up today," White wrote on The Right Stuff on March 10, shortly after the Rising Sun Coffee site went down. It remains offline to this day.

This story was updated with additional comment from Wolfhead Coffee.

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FROM VICE SPECIALS



Canadian Far Right Extremism

This Is the Man Who Ran Canada's Biggest Neo-Nazi Podcast

VICE can reveal a cosplayer named Clayton Sanford was behind a neo-Nazi recruitment tool.

By [Mack Lamoureux](#) and [Martin Patriquin](#)

Jun 14 2018, 10:01am



This project was in collaboration with the Canadian Anti-Hate Network.

Before he was a neo-Nazi, Clayton Sanford was a cosplayer.

It was May 2008 and the occasion was Anime North, one of the largest annual anime gatherings in North America. Thousands of people descended on Toronto, dressed as Japanese cartoon and gaming characters. Sanford went as Roy, a character from Nintendo's *Fire Emblem* series, complete with sky-blue armour, gold-handled sword, and a plume of striking red hair.

It was Sanford's first cosplaying event. In photos he strikes various warrior poses, usually unsmiling and faux fierce-looking with a thick red wig and gold lamé flecking his costume. "I'm always serious. Because Roy is hardcore," he wrote as a caption to one of these pictures.

As “Axe In The Deep,” Sanford hosted *This Hour Has 88 Minutes*, one of the most popular and enduring white nationalist podcasts in the country. From September 2016 until mid-May 2018, when it went dark following inquiries from VICE, 88 Minutes was a gleefully profane, forever hateful take on the news of the week.

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Clayton Sanford's pursuits were less straightforward. As a teenager he bounced around internet communities, but one really took hold—zeldapower.com, a forum dedicated to all things Zelda, the flagship Nintendo series.

As “ifm2181,” Sanford was among the site's prolific posters, appreciated for his sharp wit and salty tongue. At the same time, he was open about his high school travails and anxieties about dating. But he also discussed his disdain for visible minorities and the LGBT community, which festered into outright hatred as time progressed. His feelings towards women, at first hopeful if anxiety-tinged, metastasized in a similar fashion.



SANFORD IN 2009. PHOTO FROM SANFORD'S NOW DELETED COSPLAY.COM ACCOUNT.

Sanford became more strident in his views in the wake of Donald Trump's election and the ensuing rise of the alt-right. In 2016 he began to post on

home in our own societies because they been filled with hordes of alien foreigners, he said in an August 2017 88 Minutes podcast. “And so we do create parallel societies and friendships with our white brothers.”

VICE was able to determine that Clayton Sanford was Axe In The Deep following our publication of the Thomas White article in May. An email naming Sanford pointed us to zeldapower.com and the user ifm2181. Since 2001, ifm2181 had posted on the site more than 60,000 times. Users would sometimes refer to him as Clayton. In a pair of posts from January 2008, ifm2181 said his name was Clayton and Sanford.

By sifting through years' worth of his online presence, details about Sanford began to emerge. He lives in suburban Ottawa. His parents are no longer together. Sanford and his father, a musician and retired electrician, are close. (His father didn't respond to numerous requests for comment.) In one of the earlier podcasts, Sanford said that his dad was “kind of normal” but was “working on fashing [a term for making someone a fascist] him out a little bit.” There were grandparents in suburban Ontario and extended family in New Brunswick and Maine. He liked Airsoft and wore prescription glasses. High school was hell.

Sanford said that he “lived online” since the late 90s. He has lived with his parents for most of his adult life, hopping from job to job without finishing any meaningful post-secondary training. He writes in the ironic detached style that would come to define the online alt-right and spoke about how he had a hard time in school. His love of anime prompted a trip to Japan in 2015.

“I've known ifm2181's real name as Clayton Sanford since the early days of ZP,” Ben Arsenault, a former Zelda Power moderator, told VICE. “We knew

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SANFORD'S FINAL POST ON ZELDA POWER. PHOTO VIA SCREENSHOT

Sanford, as ifm2181, left many online crumbs. *Axe In The Deep* is more difficult to parse. Sanford didn't respond to several requests for comment for this story; we weren't able to determine what he does to fund his neo-Nazi activities, nor how he met his fellow 88 Minutes hosts. But his trajectory from angry nerd to full blown neo-Nazi is relatively straightforward: he had a few preconceived notions about race, and went further and further down the rabbit hole and emerged a fully formed neo-Nazi by the time of Trump's election.

medieval ditty sung in a Dwarven dialect and inspired by *Dwarf Fortress*, one of Sanford's favourite video games.

In the days following VICE's request for comment requests, ifm2181's page on the online artistic community DeviantArt disappeared, along with those on cosplay.com and Steam. His YouTube channel changed usernames at about the same time—the new username for his channel is “X D D D”. Someone logged into his Zelda Power account and attempted to delete tens of thousands of his posts on May 18—two days after the publication of the VICE story about Thomas White.

Yet his little used account on scienceforums.net remains active. The same goes for Sanford's Axe In The Deep Twitter account. In 2016, Axe referred to 'ifm2181' and was tagged in a picture of himself as Roy.

In addition to being This Hour Has 88 Minutes' main host, editor, and producer, Sanford (as Axe In The Deep) was arguably the show's most



A TWITTER THREAD FROM 2014 IN WHICH SANFORD RESPONDS TO A TWEET DIRECTED AT HIS FORMER USERNAME. PHOTO VIA SCREENSHOT.

His race-baiting monologues set the tone for each episode, and his language was shocking by even the alt-right's standards. He frequently dropped the N-word, slurred Indigenous people, mocked Asian people, advocated for violence against Jewish people, and made suggestive comments about a violent race war. "Words from both sides will soon turn to bullets, and white people don't shoot with their gun sideways," he said in 2016 in reference to Black Lives Matter.

His turn as a proud (if anonymous) racist is only the most recent iteration of Sanford's evolving online persona. When he was making his first digital footprints in the early 2000s, Sanford was the polar opposite of the epithet-spewing race-baiter. In May 2005, he described himself as a “destitute

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“When I knew him, Clayton was an outspoken communist,” said a female former friend, who didn’t want to be identified for fear of reprisal from Sanford and his neo-Nazi cohorts. “He actually spoke out against white supremacists and fascism. Communist Clayton wanted a separatist society. He wanted us to have a sovereign piece of land and have a commune that we’d defend with medieval weapons.”

As forums go, Zelda Power was an odd fit for Sanford, a self-professed fan of Sega, Nintendo’s 90s rival. Yet he was attracted to the freewheeling and edgy aspects of the site where users often strayed from Zelda-related yore.

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THIS HOUR HAS 88 MINUTES LOGO. PHOTO VIA SCREENSHOT.

Sanford, as ifm2181, thrived in this space for roughly 15 years. “Zelda Power was just constant drama back then, and there was a very clear pecking order,” says Arsenault. “Your identity offline didn’t matter as much as how charismatic you were on the board. ‘ifm’ was pretty witty if nothing else, so I’d say he was high up on the pecking order.”

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father's house, heating and molding ABS plastic for the armour. He shimmed the sword from a piece of oak baseboard. "I shall be Roy for the world to see," he wrote on Zelda Power a few months before Anime North.

Sanford's Zelda Power missives were appropriately laden with the blarney and braggadocio typical of online forums but, in rare occasions, he did reveal some vulnerabilities.

"My psychosis is too general and self-diagnosed to be considered real or worth talking about," he wrote in 2009. When the sister of a Zelda Power member was murdered, he was one of the first to respond with flowers and kind words. "You're one of us and we look out, sometimes in our own little ways."



SANFORD IN 2008. PHOTO FROM SANFORD'S NOW DELETED COSPLAY.COM ACCOUNT.

because they're actually in shock. Or slap them backhand like a real man," he wrote in 2008.

He also began speaking disparagingly about racial minorities. "Guns don't kill people, minorities do," he wrote in 2012, shocking by Zelda Power standards at the time but positively tame compared to what was to come. Notably, he found himself on the opposite side of Zelda Power's generally progressive opinions on Gamergate and Brexit, which said female gamers were often victims and Britain should remain in the EU. He'd been effectively ostracized when Donald Trump was elected, returning only briefly to gloat. By then, Clayton Sanford had already found another family.

Sanford came to the alt-right in 2016 via a similar path to Zelda Power in 2001: nerd culture. He found a home with The Right Stuff, the alt-right hub founded by Mike Peinovich in 2012.

"I would argue that The Right Stuff is the most important hub for the alt-right, right now. I say that mostly because of the audience it generates," Keegan Hanks of the SPLC told VICE a few weeks ago.

Sanford was a high-profile TRS member who both demanded respect and dispensed advice to fellow alt-right podcasters to better their propaganda be it memes, YouTube videos, or podcasts. "I try to look at [propaganda videos] as if I am a normie seeing my first Hitler video, and the scenes of hale gunfire and flashing stars of David and shit around in them is always off-putting. Their first video should not be naming the jew or showing war, it should be showing something normie-friendly, and this video does it well," he wrote to a user who posted a pro-Hitler video in December of 2017.



THE RIGHT STUFF USERS EXPRESSING THEIR DISPLEASURE WITH THIS HOUR HAS 88 MINUTES REMOVAL FOLLOWING A VICE INVESTIGATION. PHOTO VIA SCREENSHOT.

Sanford also wrote myriad posts extolling the virtues of a white ethnostate. Like many other “Leafs” (what the Canadian users on the forum called themselves) much of Sanford's hatred was directed at Indigenous people. “They really are just red n-----s, almost every single one of them is a fat, lazy slob, whom, if they worked as hard as they complained, could build fucking pyramids,” he wrote in 2016.

The leap from online activity to recruiting came with This Hour Has 88 Minutes. The podcast was popular in part because of its longevity; with 90 shows, it was one of the few of its kind to last beyond a few episodes.

Sanford would edit the podcast and helped create a segment called the “Rice Report” where a “correspondent” would put on a Chinese accent and speak about how Asians were taking over North America. The podcast would play host to overtly Canadian alt-right topics and parody songs like a Nazi-inspired cover of the Stan Rogers’ classic “Barrett's Privateers,” which was retitled “Manstein Grenadier,” and the first line changed to read, “Oh the year was 1943/Oh how I wish I was in Berlin now.”



THE RIGHT STUFF FORUM HOMEPAGE. PHOTO VIA SCREENSHOT.

With their attempts at racist comedy bathed in irony and cynicism, these podcasts are significantly closer to how the alt-right shit-posters operate online than the pseudo-intellectual products offered by the existing white supremacist websites.

“Podcasts are extremely important to the movement, this is evident by how many there are, particularly on the Right Stuff network where This Hour Has 88 Minutes was hosted,” Hankes told VICE. “They have made a prolific amount of content in their short couple of years in existence. It’s really critical for new and fledging members indoctrination into this world.”



AN IMAGE OF AN EPISODE OF THIS HOUR HAS 88 MINUTES PLAYING. PHOTO VIA SCREENSHOT.

But the heightened profile of these online neo-Nazis also meant more attention from journalists and anti-fascists. As the identities of people like Gabriel Sohler-Chaput (“Zeiger”) and Thomas White were revealed, an increasingly panicked Sanford urged his fellow users to get off the Discord platform, the source of many leaks to several anti-fascist activists, because he was worried about his friends' identities being revealed.

In July of 2017, for the first time, the Leafs met. The event, which took months to plan, was dubbed Leafensraum—a distinctly Canuck riff on “Lebensraum,” a term for Nazi-era colonialism. Speeches were given, fireworks were set off, and the white race was lionized. One attendee brought two giant tubs of mayonnaise to celebrate whiteness. It was, for a lack of a better term, an all-male Nazi camp out.

Almost 40 high-level neo-Nazis attended the event in southern Ontario from July 21-24 where they shared cabins, booze, and ideas. They came from all over: one American came north; others still drove in from New

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from his Ottawa-area home.



A PHOTO OF WHERE LEAFENSRAUM TOOK PLACE POSTED BY ZEIGER IN HIS NOW REMOVED WRITE UP OF THE EVENT ON THE DAILY STORMER. PHOTO VIA SCREENSHOT.

It had much of the same comradery of the anime convention nearly a decade earlier, though instead of discussing the finer points of anime—like the political importance of tentacle porn no longer being a pervasive part of the medium—he was now hiking, drinking Scotch, and plotting a white-only future with his fellow Nazis.

Like the conventions of his youth, Sanford adored his time spent with his online friends—including his fellow podcast hosts. "It was the first time we met. The whole crew was all together for the first time, along with pretty much every guest we ever had," Sanford would say on a later 88 Minutes podcast.

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through various media outlets and a concerted doxxing campaign by several anti-fascist groups. It has effectively silenced them for now. The Right Stuff forum has clammed up and This Hour Has 88 Minutes is done, seemingly leaving Clayton Sanford without an online voice for the first time in over a decade.

It is a welcome silence for at least one of his former friends.

“Clayton Sanford can't be allowed to operate in the dark as a white supremacist with a platform,” says Ben Arsenault. “On the surface I want to hate him for being a Nazi. But the truth is that it just makes me sad, and I miss my friend.”

With files from Alheli Picazo

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FROM VICE SPECIALS

News

Two Canadian Neo-Nazis Are Under Investigation For Post-Christchurch Acts

One neo-Nazi is under investigation for posting the Christchurch manifesto, the other for allegedly listing out good “targets” in Canada for lone wolf attackers.

By Mack Lamoureux

Mar 19 2019, 1:30pm  



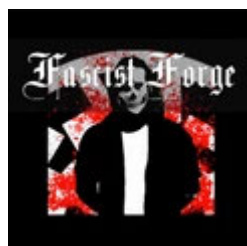
KEVIN GOUDREAU, LEFT, PAUL FROMM, RIGHT. IMAGES VIA FACEBOOK.

Two prominent Canadian neo-Nazis are under police investigation for their actions following the white nationalist terror attack in New Zealand late last week.

One man is under investigation for allegedly posting and endorsing the manifesto of the Christchurch gunman who's been charged with murder for the shootings that killed 50 Muslims and injured 50 more late last week. The other man is under investigation for allegedly attempting to inspire similar violent actions against Canadians. Both have been involved with the Canadian neo-Nazi movement for decades. No charges have been laid in either incident.

uploading the Christchurch manifesto to the website of his white nationalist group, the Canadian Association for Free Expression. The manifesto, entitled “The Great Replacement” was originally posted online by Brenton Tarrant shortly before the March 15 mosque attacks—17,000 words that mix far-right tropes, trolling, and white nationalist ideology.

For decades, Fromm has been one of Canada’s highest profile white supremacists, working as the international director of the white supremacist Council of Conservative Citizens, the leader of the Canadian Association for Free Expression, and working as a co-host on Stormfront Radio. Most recently, Fromm was in the news when he ran for mayor in Hamilton.



Online Neo-Nazis Are Increasingly Embracing Terror Tactics

MACK LAMOUREUX, BEN MAKUCH

In a lengthy write-up that accompanied the manifesto, Fromm claimed he doesn’t endorse the violence, but wrote when “debate and dissent are silenced by ‘hate laws’ you make violence almost inevitable.” Fromm added, “[Tarrant’s] analysis of the crisis we face is cogent.” Speaking to *Global News*, the Hamilton police service said they’re looking into the posting and “are currently investigating in order to determine if a criminal offence has occurred.”

Richard Warman, a human rights lawyer and a board member of Canadian Anti-Hate Network, told VICE that he would like to see Fromm charged.

involvement with the neo-Nazi movement here in Canada,” said Warman. “In this case I think he has gone well over the bright red line in terms of posting the terror manifesto.”

Meanwhile, a post appeared on the Facebook page of long-time neo-Nazi Kevin Goudreau, which called for attacks against a litany of targets. Goudreau, who resides in Peterborough, Ontario, has denied writing the posts, though they were posted by an account with his name. Among the targets listed in the post are Antifa, the Canadian Anti Hate Network (of which Warman is a board member), Anti-Racism Canada, and “any government organization like the Human Rights Commission.” The post also mentioned CBC, VICE, and the *National Post*.



Atomwaffen, an American Neo-Nazi Terror Group, Is In Canada

MACK LAMOUREUX, BEN MAKUCH

Goudreau, who has a shotgun and swastika tattooed on his chest, told local news site *My Kawartha* that he does not endorse violence and that the post was probably written by “just people messing with [him.]”

Goudreau has been a longtime player in the Canadian neo-Nazi scene. He heads up the Canadian Nationalist Front—of which he seems to be one of the only members—and is one of Canada’s most prolific posters on Stormfront (an infamous and longstanding neo-Nazi forum). Warman described him as a “lone-wolf” whose “involvement of the movement dates back to the 80s and 90s where he was involved in the Heritage Front. So he's had an extended period of time involved in the neo-Nazi movement.”

repeatedly as a racist threat against that man and group based on his racist ideology,” said Warman. “I think it's high time that the police start taking his threats seriously and say we have laws against uttering threats and, not only that, you can't counsel people to commit murder.”

“I think the fact there has been no consequences emboldens him to continue making these threats of violence up to this point where he is now counselling murder.”

In a press release, Peterborough Police said they are “aware of the information being posted and circulated on social media regarding potential threats or hate crimes.” Warman said he made a formal complaint to police.

In his complaint, which was provided to VICE, Warman wrote that “Kevin Goudreau... for years uttered threats of hate-motivated violence online against his perceived enemies. For reasons that I am unable to comprehend as a lawyer, he has gotten away with it up to now.”

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Playing Dungeons and Dragons with John Darnielle of Mountain Goats

FROM VICE CANADA REPORTS



Canadian Far Right Extremism

Warrant Issued For ‘Zeiger’, Canada’s Most Infamous Neo-Nazi

Zeiger, real-name Gabriel Sohier Chaput, helped move the far-right even further into the extremes.

By **Mack Lamoureux**

Nov 13 2018, 10:14am



GABRIEL SOHIER CHAPUT. PHOTO VIA THE SPLC.

Police have obtained an arrest warrant for Gabriel Sohier Chaput, a man who is alleged to be Zeiger, Canada’s most influential neo-Nazi and a key player in the alt-right.

According to the Montreal Gazette, court records show that police obtained the warrant at the end of October—the only count listed is willful promotion

fascists supplied reporters with information connecting Sohier Chaput to the infamous neo-Nazi.

Zeiger has for years been one of the most influential voices within the far-right globally making key contributions to both the ideology and the ironically detached tone of the community. Keegan Hanks, a research analyst for the Southern Poverty Law Center's Intelligence Project, told VICE Canada that it's hard to overstate the influence Zeiger had within some of the most extreme circles of the far-right.

"He was definitely a big player," said Hanks. "He was one of the most recognizable names at the Daily Stormer, he also, of course, was a prolific content producer having a wealth of written and recorded materials that were very well respected."

Zeiger was an extremely active user and moderator on the now-defunct Iron March forum (which has been linked to a wave of white supremacist terror) and edited their online zine Noose. He also was instrumental in the resurgence of the ideas of James Mason—editing Siege, a collection of publications and newsletters by Mason that has been incredibly influential in the neo-Nazi scene. Siege encouraged lone-wolf acts of violence; Hanks described Siege as “very, very extreme texts” and added that “the fact he played a role in rehabilitating that and bringing it to a wide audience is very significant.” He also authored several of his own books, one, “Hammer of the Patriot,” is well-read and respected in these circles.

In addition to all that, Zeiger is one of the key players in the Daily Stormer—the infamous online neo-Nazi outlet which worked as the trendsetter for the ironic and online brand of neo-Nazi we have all come to know. The Daily Stormer has intense notoriety and one of the larger readerships in the right

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Neo-Nazis Want Canadian Military Training

BEN MAKUCH, MACK LAMOUREUX

time of his outing Zeiger was the Daily Stormer's second most prolific author.

In the end, Zeiger's key contribution to the far-right was somehow moving them even further to extremes. Hankes explained to VICE that Zeiger worked as a "bridge" between little-known places like Iron March and the Daily Stormer, bringing "more obscure and extreme corners of the far-right to those with more of an audience."

"He was the guy at the Daily Stormer who promoted Atomwaffen early on," said Hankes. Atomwaffen is a neo-Nazi terrorist cell linked to five deaths in 2017. Atomwaffen was birthed on Iron March and many of those in the cell are obsessed with the philosophy of Siege and James Mason.

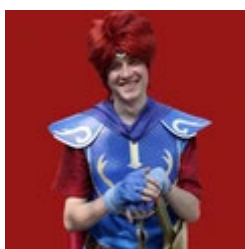
Canada's first alt-right meet up in 2017, he was one of the keynote speakers.

After an investigation by the Montreal Gazette corroborated anti-fascists' evidence that Zeiger was Gabriel Sohier Chaput, groups protested and flyered his neighbourhood, making sure that everyone knew who the man was. Shortly thereafter Zeiger, joining his cohorts at the Daily Stormer (all of which are on the run or underground) went into hiding. Evan Balgord, executive director of the Canadian Anti-Hate Network, said that alongside disappearing himself, Zeiger's once prolific output has slowed down. (Full disclosure: VICE Canada has collaborated with the Canadian Anti-Hate Network on previous investigations into the far right.)

"Since Zeiger's identity was found out he's gone quiet," said Balgord. "I'm sure he's still active in some sense but in the grand scope of things he's certainly not as prolific as he's been."

Ricochet spoke to one of the anti-fascist activists who supplied the information that brought Zeiger down. The activist told Ricochet that while they're happy to see "Nazis in any kind of trouble," they don't know if police are taking the situation completely seriously and have asked why they aren't going after other active neo-Nazis in the province.

"Why don't they investigate these guys, who are still very much active, rather than ride on our coattails six months after the fact?"



This Is the Man Who Ran Canada's Biggest Neo-Nazi Podcast

MACK LAMOUREUX, MARTIN PATRIQUIN

and only used in the “worst of the worst” situations. The section has been used to imprison people before including in 2007 when a man who ran a white supremacist site that paid tribute to the KKK and Timothy McVeigh was sentenced to six months and in 2013, a man who ran a racist YouTube channel got 11 months. Balgord told VICE that he believes the warrant sends a good message and he looks “forward to Zeiger being found and going to trial.”

"It's a good thing, overall. Zeiger was certainly one of the worst of the worst hate propagandists internationally and he was here in our own backyard in Canada spreading this hate," Balgord said. "There are other individuals in Canada that we know have been spreading hate propaganda not dissimilar from Zeiger and they have to be looking at this thinking, 'am I going to be charged?'"

“The answer for some of them, I believe, will be yes.”

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